



**U.S. National Statement  
In Support of “Like-Minded Statement”**

**Ambassador Robert P. Mikulak  
United States Delegation to the Seventy-Seventh Session  
of the Executive Council  
Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons**

**October 10, 2014**

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Mister Chairman,

The United States fully supports and associates itself with the “Like-Minded-Statement” circulated to the members of the Executive Council. The statement on behalf of this like-minded group of some forty States Parties has been necessitated by the inability of the Executive Council, at its Seventy-Seventh Session, to reach consensus on holding the Syrian Arab Republic responsible for its continued use of chemical weapons against the Syrian people, which raises serious concerns about its compliance with obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention, UN Security Council Resolution 2118, and the decisions of the Executive Council.

In its second report, dated 10 September 2014, the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission issued a compelling set of conclusions and evidentiary findings implicating the Syrian government in deadly chemical weapons attacks against three villages in northern Syria during April and May 2014. The Fact-Finding Mission concluded that the testimony of primary witnesses and supporting documentation, including medical reports and other relevant information, “constitutes a compelling confirmation that a toxic chemical was used as a weapon, systematically and repeatedly, in the villages of Talmanes, Al Tamanah, and Kafr Zeta in northern Syria.” Further, it concludes “with a high degree of confidence, that chlorine, either pure or in mixture, is the toxic chemical in question.” The Fact-Finding Mission emphasized that “in describing the incidents involving the release of toxic chemicals, witnesses invariably connected the devices to helicopters flying overhead.” It is well known that the Syrian Government

is the only party to the conflict in Syria possessing helicopters or any other aerial capability - YouTube videos confirm this fact.

The Council's inability to reach consensus is compounded by indicators that the Syrian government is continuing its use of chemical weapons. Indeed, the Fact-Finding Mission emphasized that “during the month of August there was a spate of new allegations, with accounts of the incidents bearing strong resemblance to those that are now confirmed as having been chlorine attacks.”

The States Parties joining in this statement refuse to be silent while a representative of the Syrian regime sits among us. We are determined that Syria be held accountable, that the verification regime for Syria be strengthened, that a concerted effort be made to treat and assist the victims of chemical attacks, and that action be taken to deter and prevent further attacks on the people of Syria.

Almost a hundred years ago chlorine was used as a chemical weapon near Ypres, Belgium. The name of the very room where this Council meets – the Ypres room - is meant as a reminder to all of us both of the horrors of chemical weapons and the imperative, for the sake of all mankind, that we do everything in our power to ensure such heinous weapons are never used again.

Today, this Council did not reach a consensus decision honoring that solemn obligation. This Council must right its compass. It must be vigilant until these

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chemical weapons attacks cease, until those responsible are held accountable, and until the Syrian government is completely disarmed of its chemical weapons.

Mister Chairman,

In closing, let me say more broadly, the United States is extremely dismayed by the deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in Syria and firmly holds that a lasting solution to the crisis urgently requires a political transition.

I ask that my statement be made an official document of this session of the Executive Council and posted to both the OPCW external server and the public website.

Thank you.